

Washburn-Crosby Milling Complex,
Utility Building
630 South Second Street
Minneapolis
Hennepin County
Minnesota

HABS No. MN-69-J

HABS
MINN,
27-MINAP,
20-J-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225

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20-J-

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
WASHBURN-CROSBY MILLING COMPLEX,
UTILITY BUILDING

HABS No. MN-69^{69-J}

Location: 630 South Second Street, Lot 4 of 7th Avenue
South, Minneapolis, Hennepin County, Minnesota

USGS Minneapolis South Quadrangle, Universal
Transverse Mercator Coordinates: Zone 15;
479740:4980480; 479860:4980420; 479820:4980360;
479700:4980400

Present Owner: Riverside Industries, Inc.
P.O. Box 1125
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55440

Present Occupant: None

Present Use: Vacant

Significance: Building is part of the Washburn-Crosby Complex
in the St. Anthony Falls Historic District. The
techniques developed at the Washburn-Crosby Co.,
later becoming General Mills, made Minneapolis
the leader in flour milling throughout the U.S.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION See HABS No. MN-69 for general information.

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: Construction of the Utility Building was begun on June 12, 1914.
2. Architects: Hewitt and Brown. Edwin Hewitt (1874-1939) born in Red Wing, Minnesota, 1874. Educated at Hobart College, Minneapolis, School of Art, University of Minnesota. He worked at Cass Gilbert's office in Boston.

Architect of: St. Marks Cathedral, YMCA, Hennepin Avenue
Methodist Church, Homes etc. in Minneapolis.

Studied at the Ecole des Beaux Arts Paris, four years and in
1904 opened his own office in Minneapolis.

Edwin Brown: (1875-1930)
Hewitt and Brown Firm
716 4th Avenue South
Won competition to improve the Bridge Square area in 1905. This
was organized by Robert Craik McLean (editor of Western Arch.
Jan. 1926 V. 35, No. 1, p. 11)
Hewitt and Brown designed many private residences in
Minneapolis:

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- Edwin H. Hewitt, 126 Franklin Avenue East
 - Charles S. Pillsbury, 100 East 22nd Street
 - George Christian, 2301 3rd Avenue South
(now Hennepin County Historical Society)
 - Walter G. Hudson, 2400 Pillsbury Avenue South
 - Robert Webb, 1920 Pillsbury Avenue South
 - J.L. Becord, 343 Oak Grove
 - St. Marks Episcopal Church, Hennepin Avenue and Oak Grove
 - Hennepin Avenue Methodist Church, Hennepin and Groveland
 - Northwestern National Life Bldg, Oak Grove and 15th Street
 - McKnight Bldg, 5th Street and 2nd Avenue, South & 6th Street
(now Pillsbury Building)
 - Unwoody Industrial Institute, Wayzata Boulevard and Lyndale
 - The Blake School, 511 Kenwood Parkway
(now Northrop Campus of the Blake Schools)
 - Citizens' Aid Building, 700 Washington Avenue North
 - Northwestern Bell Building, 3rd Avenue South 5th Street
3. Original and subsequent owner: The Utility Building originally housed the operations of the Washburn-Crosby Co. In 1880 this company was developed by Cadwallader C. Washburn, later to become General Mills. From 1914-1965 the Utility building was owned by Washburn-Crosby Co./General Mills. From 1965 to the present, Riverside Industries, Inc. has been the owners.
4. Builder, contractor: The 1914 Utility Building was built by the Pike and Cook Company. Building Permits #A15243, \$3,000; #A22155, \$20,000; #A2416B, \$7,000; #A14099, \$6,000; #A1250B, \$85,000; #I447, \$6,000; #A6357, \$8,400.
5. Original plans and construction: Original plans are in the collection of Miller-Dunwiddie Associates, Inc., 3601 Minnesota Drive, Minneapolis, Minnesota.
6. Alterations and additions: Two 25,000 gallon water tanks were added to the roof on 4/22/1918 (Permit #A14099, \$6,000). In 1920 a brick and reinforced concrete bandroom was put on the roof of the building (Permit #A15243, \$3,000).

Two 25,000 gallon tanks and supports added 9/1/48 (Permit #A28242).

On August 22, 1935 a steel frame addition was put between the Washburn "A" Mill and the Utility Building for flour storage bins (Permit #A22155, \$20,000).

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B. Historical Context:

The Utility Building was originally owned by Washburn-Crosby Co. and was built to house packaging operations. In 1905 use of one floor of the new machine shop building was suggested for use as a lunch and lounge room for employees. In 1919, the company cafeteria was installed on the first floor of the Utility Building. The cafeteria served its first meal on March 16, 1920. The cost of the cafeteria was \$15,000.

Belt and sheet metal shops were moved to the building to make room for more cleaning machinery in the "A" Mill. Also a power plant was located in the Utility Building. In 1920, "Betty Crocker" was created and her kitchen also occupied space in the Utility Building. The name "Crocker" was derived from the warm and good natured director of the company, William C. Crocker. The development of "Betty Crocker" came from requests to the company for recipes and baking tips. On September 12, 1924 WCCO radio station took over WLAG and changed their name logo from "Call of The North" to "The Gold Medal Station". Washburn-Crosby Co. started WCCO with the Minneapolis Civic and Commerce Association and the St. Paul Association backing station by paying 50% of the operating costs for three years. The call letters "WCCO" stand for Washburn-Crosby Co.

PART II: ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The Utility Building is an eleven-story pale yellow brick and reinforced concrete structure. The south facade has three pilasters with a terra-cotta milling figure atop each. The center figure represents a 1914 modern flour miller at a modern flour milling machine. The figure to the east is pounding grain in a mortar and the one to the west is squatting over a primitive hand-turned quern. The figures were carved half-size, 3 or 4 feet tall, and they were then doubled in size by a terra-cotta firm and reproduced in glazed terra-cotta. The sculptor, John Karl Daniels was born in Vik, Norway and came to the U.S. when he was eight years old. Mr. Daniels was paid \$200-\$300 for his one and one-half month's work. Sculpting was done by watching workers at the mill, no models were used. Two large sized windows placed in the center of the horizontal band of windows are balanced by two smaller windows on each end.
2. Condition of fabric: The Utility Building has not been kept up since it was abandoned. Graffiti is located in the interior as well as on the exterior.

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B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall Dimensions: The Utility Building is the largest structure in the Washburn "A" Mill complex, it has over 100,000 square feet and is eleven stories high.
2. Foundations: Reinforced concrete footings support the brick and concrete walls.
3. Structural system, framing: The Utility Building is of reinforced concrete construction throughout.
4. Roof: On the south facade is an arch over three figures, otherwise the roof is flat. Water tanks are located on the roof (Permits #A14099, #A28242).
5. Site: The Utility Building was built in 1914 and faces Washington Avenue. The east wall abuts the Washburn "A" Mill. The north elevation of the Utility Building faces the Mississippi River where the St. Anthony Falls Lock and Dam are located. On the south side of the Utility Building is the Milwaukee Road Depot and railroad trackage. This area was once considered the "West Side Milling District" of Minneapolis. The existing buildings are only a small portion of what the Washburn-Crosby Milling Co. used to contain. The boundaries for the Washburn-Crosby buildings are South First Street, South Second Street, Portland Avenue and Eighth Avenue South.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Original Architectural Drawings: Original drawings for the Utility Building are in the collection of Miller-Dunwiddie Associates, Inc., 3601 Minnesota Drive, Minneapolis, Minnesota.
- B. Old Views: Photos from General Mills, Inc., Minneapolis, 1-21, 1928-49 show interior views in the Utility Building. From the collections of the Minnesota Historical Society's Audio Visual Library, Exterior and Aerial Views of the Milling complex at different time periods were taken.
- C. Interviews:
 1. Don Noel - retired Millwright
 2. Bill Praus - Shop Estimator

D. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

- a. Gazetteer, Vol. 20, 1916-1917, Minneapolis.
- b. Public Library, MHS.

2. Secondary and published sources:

- a. Minneapolis Tribune, August 11, 1968.
- b. Insurance Maps, Sanborn, Vol. 3, Minneapolis 1920.
- c. Kuhlman, Development of the Flour Milling Industry in the U.S., Boston, 1929.
- d. National Register of Historic Places
- e. North Minneapolis Post, September 25, 1975.

Prepared by:
Diane Chonis
University of Minnesota
March 1986

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was prepared as a class project for Architecture 5142, Historic Building Research and Documentation, a class offered in the School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota. The class project was prepared under the direction of Professor Foster W. Dunwiddie in cooperation with the State Historic Preservation Office of the Minnesota Historical Society, Saint Paul, Minnesota. Historical data was compiled by Diane Chonis, University of Minnesota, March 1986.